

ACCEPTANCE

Previously we learned that your relationship with God is secure because, through Christ, you are forgiven and accepted by God.

Relationship vs. Fellowship:

In addition to providing this eternal relationship, God also desires for you to enjoy walking closely with Him and communicating with Him throughout each day. This is called fellowship.

When we choose to sin, our permanent **relationship** with God as His children is not affected, but our **fellowship** with Him is interrupted.

For example, your relationship with your earthly father is permanent. No matter what you do, you will always be his child. But suppose you rebelled against your father and angrily left home in spite of his efforts to reach out to you.

Would you still be your father's child?

What would happen to your fellowship?

This relationship with your imperfect, earthly father is a picture of how you can relate to your perfect heavenly Father.

Comparing relationship with fellowship:

Your Relationship with God	Your Fellowship with God
Began when you received Christ (John 1:12)	Began when you received Christ (Colossians 2:6)
Is everlasting (1 Peter 1:3,4)	Can be hindered (Psalm 32:3-5)
Is maintained totally by God (John 10:27-29)	Is maintained in part by you (1 John 1:9)
Never changes (Hebrews 13:5)	Changes when you sin (Psalm 66:18)

Though all Christians have an eternal **relationship** with God, not all Christians are experiencing daily **fellowship** with Him.

Let's see how we can consistently experience fellowship with God.



KEY QUESTION *What has Christ done with the sins you will commit tomorrow or next year?*

3 Experiencing God's love and forgiveness

Even though your relationship with God is permanent and you are totally forgiven, you still need to deal with your sins on a day-to-day basis in order to experience a continuing fellowship with God.

Put yourself in the earlier father-child illustration.

What would you do to restore fellowship with your father?

Read 1 John 1:9. *How do you restore your fellowship with God?*

Confession is agreeing with God about sin.

When God brings to your attention that something you have done is sin, confess it. This confession involves at least three factors:

1. **Agree** with God that you have sinned.
2. **Thank** God that He has already forgiven you.
3. **Turn away** from sin and trust God to change your wrong attitudes and actions (repentance).

By turning back to God and away from your sin, you will experience His love and forgiveness provided by Christ's death on the cross. Instead of feeling guilty or condemned, you can know that your fellowship with God is restored.

Putting confession into practice.

Tonight:

- Ask God to reveal any sins in your life.
- List these on a piece of paper. Be completely honest since this is just between you and God.
- After completing your list, write over it the words of 1 John 1:9.
- Thank God for the forgiveness He provides for you through what Christ did on the cross.
- Tear up the list and throw it away.

How many times do you need to confess a particular sin to God?

When should you confess a sin?

Experiencing the results of confession.

Read Psalms 32:5 and 103:12.

What does God do with our guilt when we confess?

What should you do if you still feel guilty after you have confessed your sins?



KEY QUESTION *From what you have learned today, what will happen if you fail to confess your sin when God points it out?*



SUMMARY **An intimate relationship with God is the privilege of every believer who confesses his sin whenever God makes him aware of it.**

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Growing in God's love and forgiveness

Take some time tonight to apply the things you have learned about God's love and forgiveness. Start by making your list of sins as mentioned in Point #3.

This week, try to spend 15 minutes each day alone with God in Bible reading and prayer. Here are some suggestions:

- **Read Luke 15:11-32.** This story was told by Jesus of a young man who ran away from his father and wasted his inheritance. What does this story illustrate about our relationship with God, our forgiveness and our fellowship with Him?
- **Read Galatians 5:16-23.** What changes will take place as you allow God to work in your life? As you become aware of an area of your life that displeases God, deal with it according to 1 John 1:9 and then enjoy your fellowship with Him.
- **Read Psalm 32.** This psalm describes David's experience with confession. How did he feel before he confessed his sin? How did he feel after dealing with his sin?



SUMMARY **Understanding God's great love and forgiveness allows a Christian to enjoy a growing fellowship with Him.**



LOOKING AHEAD Next time we will look at how to experience God's power to live an abundant Christian life.

Next meeting time is:

